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GROUP EXERCISES

FLORA J. COOKE

Definite efforts have been made to bring the morning exercises into touch with the children's natural interests outside the school. The different grades have been canvassed, and the pupils asked if there were subjects about which they would like to have exercises given. Airships, submarine boats, vacation experiences, Indians, and electricity were among the topics which were requested. On one occasion, a group of high-school boys on their own initiative, took up the subject of airships, planned an exercise, executed drawings, and made an interesting presentation.

The children's interests in collections have been recognized, and profitable exercises have resulted. On a chosen morning, every child who wished to exhibit a collection of stamps, coins, stones, pictures, or curios, brought it to the school, and set it up in some class room. There were different rooms for different kinds of collections. People who wished to see the exhibits of coins went to the coin room; those who wished to see stamps went to the stamp room. The plan had the added advantage of breaking up grade lines and bringing children of different ages into small social groups.

At other times, we have had the children divided, according to their strongest interests, into groups for games, music, charades, and story-telling; at other times they have chosen between hearing a talk upon some science subject and listening to reading of some good story. The chairmen of these groups have sometimes been children, sometimes teachers.

As the study of French and German begins in the third grade, another form of divided exercise has been to have all the pupils of the school who understand French meet in one place for French games, songs, and dramatizations, while the German groups met in another place for a similar exercise in German.

At one time a question box was placed in the hall, and into it children put science questions which they would like to have answered. This took complicated directing and has since been better organized but the need of a means of satisfying individual interests and questions is an important phase in morning-exercise planning.

THE QUESTION TYPE OF MORNING EXERCISE

WALLACE F. WORTHLEY

A special type of morning exercise on children's expressed interests has developed recently which permits an informal discussion to take

place between the speaker and the school community. It began as an outgrowth of sixth-grade science. The classes had been studying astronomy; the origin of the earth, the solar system, the constellations, meteors, comets, and allied topics. So many questions were asked which showed that there was a tremendous natural interest in the subject that it was decided to answer these questions before the lower school at morning exercise. An opportunity was given to any one in the audience to answer the questions as they were asked. A teacher of science in the high school led the discussion, explaining, correcting, or supplementing with further information whenever it was needed.

After the exercise was over, an invitation was given to all to write out questions, which they would like to have answered, on any subject of science as biology, physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy. These questions, when classified, formed the basis for several exercises of the same type.

Later this type of exercise was modified somewhat as follows: a series of short talks on "Instinct and Intelligence in Insects" was given by the biology teacher, and after each talk the children were encouraged to comment upon the material of the talk, to ask questions, or to add information gained from their own experience or their own reading on the subject. This type of morning exercise has been very popular, and the children have learned to expect at least two each month.

STORY-TELLING EXERCISES

IRENE I. CLEAVES AND KATHERINE CLEMENTS

They seemed a little hazy in the Ivanhoe class about Shadrach and his famous brethren of the fiery furnace. "What Bible stories do you know?" brought hesitating replies. Charles had seen some moving pictures of Samson the week before. "There's something," mused Mary, "about David in the lions' den." "I can't remember it very well," drawled Edna contemplatively, "but I have a Child's Bible, and I know there's a story about seven good queens and seven wicked queens, and the seven wicked queens blew out all the lights, and the seven good queens couldn't see their way home." Evidently we had not kept our lamps trimmed and burning. These children had missed part of their birthright.¹

The French have a useful saying that if every man were doing what he is fitted to do, the cows would be well tended. Not all children are fitted, in this day of universal book education, to revel in what Stevenson calls "purple passages," or to esteem "Lycidas" the

¹ It is a sad fact that the children quoted in the first paragraph of this article are not more ignorant of Bible literature than our average eighth-grade boy or girl. We wonder if our experience is uncommon—if other schools find that Bible stories are told in the homes. As most of our children have good homes and many attend Sunday school, it is difficult to account for the ignorance which prevails in this form of the world's great literature.